

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method to enable user-authoring of content within an interactive television environment, the method including:

at a source system, communicating television content to a receiver system, the television content to be presented to a user by the receiver system;

at the source system, communicating authoring data, associated with the television content, to the receiver system; and

at the source system, communicating an authoring application to the receiver system, the authoring application being executable by the receiver system to enable the user to author content utilizing the authoring data.
2. The method of claim 1, including, at the source system, receiving the authoring data from a content source, and associating the authoring data with the television content.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the authoring data is contextual to the television content.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the authoring application comprises a messaging application executable by the receiver system to enable the user to include the authored content within a message, and to enable the user to

communicate the message.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the television content, the authoring data, and the authoring application are communicated from the source system as a combined communication.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the combined communication comprises a broadcast.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the source system includes a multiplexer to multiplex the television content, the authoring data, and the authoring application.

8. The method of claim 1, including, at the receiver system, executing the authoring application, receiving from the user identification of at least a portion of the authoring data associated with the television content, and including the portion of the authoring data within the authored content.

9. The method of claim 8, including executing the authoring application to present a user interface for display on the receiver system, the user interface to receive the user identification of the portion of the authoring data to be included within the author content.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the user interface presents the authoring data in association with the television content at the receiver system for user-selection.

11. The method of claim 1, including, at the receiver system, executing the authoring application to transmit the authored content as part of a message to a recipient.
12. The method of claim 11, including executing the authoring application to prompt the user to provide identification information for the recipient.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver system is an interactive television system, and the authoring application is an interactive television application.
14. The method of claim 1, including, at the receiver system, executing the authoring application to present a virtual keyboard for display on the receiver system, the virtual keyboard to facilitate alphanumeric input by a user.
15. The method of claim 1, including, at the receiver system, executing the authoring application to receive alphanumeric input from a user, and to identify the alphanumeric input for inclusion within the authored content.
16. The method of claim 1, including, at the receiver system, executing the authoring application to receive a recipient identifier to identify a recipient of a message that includes the authored content.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the message comprises a SMS message, and the recipient identifier comprises a telephone number.
18. The method of claim 16, wherein the message comprises an e-mail

message, and the recipient identifier comprises an e-mail address.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the message comprises an instant message, and the recipient identifier comprises an instant message handle.
20. The method of claim 16, including executing the authoring application at the receiver system to communicate the message via a return path to the source system.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the return path is a bi-directional communication channel.
22. The method of claim 1, wherein the authoring data includes at least one of a group of information types including numeric, alphanumeric, picture, logo, icon, video, and audio data.
23. A system including:
 - a source system to distribute content to a receiver system, the source system further to distribute auxiliary information, associated with the content, to the receiver system; and
 - a receiver system to receive the auxiliary information from the receiver system together with a recipient identifier, and to cause the auxiliary information to be included within a message to be communicated to a recipient identified by the recipient identifier.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the source system includes a broadcast system to broadcast the content to the receiver system.
25. The system of claim 24, wherein the broadcast system is further to broadcast the auxiliary information to the receiver system.
26. The system of claim 23, wherein the source system is to distribute a messaging application to the receiver system, the messaging application to present the auxiliary information for communication to the receiver system.
27. The system of claim 26, wherein the source system is to distribute the messaging application in conjunction with the content and the auxiliary information.
28. The system of claim 23, wherein the receiver system is to communicate the auxiliary information to a messaging system for inclusion within the message.
29. The system of claim 23, wherein the message is an SMS message, and the recipient identifier is a telephone number.
30. The system of claim 23, wherein the message is an e-mail message, and the recipient identifier is an e-mail address.
31. The system of claim 23, wherein the message is an instant message, and the recipient identifier is an instant message handle.
32. An authoring application for execution on a client machine, the authoring

application including:

a receiver component to receive auxiliary information, associated with the broadcast content;

a display component to display the auxiliary information to a user, and to receive user identification of at least a portion of the auxiliary content; and

a messaging component to identify the portion of the auxiliary content to a messaging system for inclusion within a message.

33. The authoring application of claim 32, wherein the messaging component is to communicate the portion of the auxiliary content to the messaging system.

34. The authoring application of claim 32, wherein the display component is to receive alphanumeric input from the user for inclusion within the message, and the messaging component is to communicate the alphanumeric input to the messaging system.

35. The authoring application of claim 34, wherein the display component is to display a virtual keyboard via the client machine to a user, the virtual keyboard to facilitate input of the alphanumeric input by the user into the client machine.

36. The authoring application of claim 32, wherein the display component is to receive a recipient identifier identifying a recipient of the message.

37. The authoring application of claim 36, wherein the recipient identifier is selected by a user from a list of stored recipient identifiers.
38. The authoring application of claim 36, wherein the recipient identifier is received as alphanumeric input from the user.
39. The authoring application of claim 32, wherein the messaging component is to communicate with the messaging system of via a return path.
40. The authoring application of claim 39, wherein the return path is a bi-directional communication channel.
41. A machine-readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by machine, causing machine to perform the method of claim 1.
42. A machine-readable medium storing a set of instructions that, when executed by machine, cause the machine to perform any of the methods described herein.